



Remarks for House Workforce and Talent Development Committee

Hearing Date 1/21/2016

RE: HB 5202

On behalf of the members of the Michigan Statewide Independent Living Council, and our partners at Disability Network Michigan, I would like to voice our support, with an addition, to HB 5202.

The mission of the Michigan Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) is to provide leadership, research, planning and education required to support independent living services in Michigan with a vision towards creating inclusive communities for persons with disabilities across the state. In implementing that mission, we focus on the systemic barriers that exist for persons with disabilities to achieve their desired measure of integration with the community.

One of the ongoing systemic barriers the SILC remains concerned with is the number of persons with disabilities, and especially youth with disabilities, who are finding competitive, integrated employment. We know that, according to 2013 Census data, only 26.9% of working age Michiganders with disabilities are employed. We also know that, according to the 2013 SSI Annual Statistical Report, only 4.6% of Michigan SSI recipients (those who are diagnosed with a disability in their youth) are working. The next State Plan for Independent Living is focusing a large amount of its effort on this population.

The connection of this Youth Advisory Council within the Department of Talent and Economic Development is a welcome step towards connecting the voice of Michigan's youth with the professionals responsible for helping business develop and retain talent. The SILC itself is looking at restarting the Youth Leadership Forum for youth with disabilities in order to motivate and empower more of the youth voice inside of the disability community. We would strongly encourage consideration of language within this bill that requires the appointment, possibly from the Governor's pool of appointments, a youth with a disability to the Council. The SILC under these circumstances would certainly provide any assistance the Governor required in identifying candidates for that appointment.

We urge the Committee to develop this bill further and move it forward for consideration, and add the SILC's voice to those in support of this bill.

For more information, contact:

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